

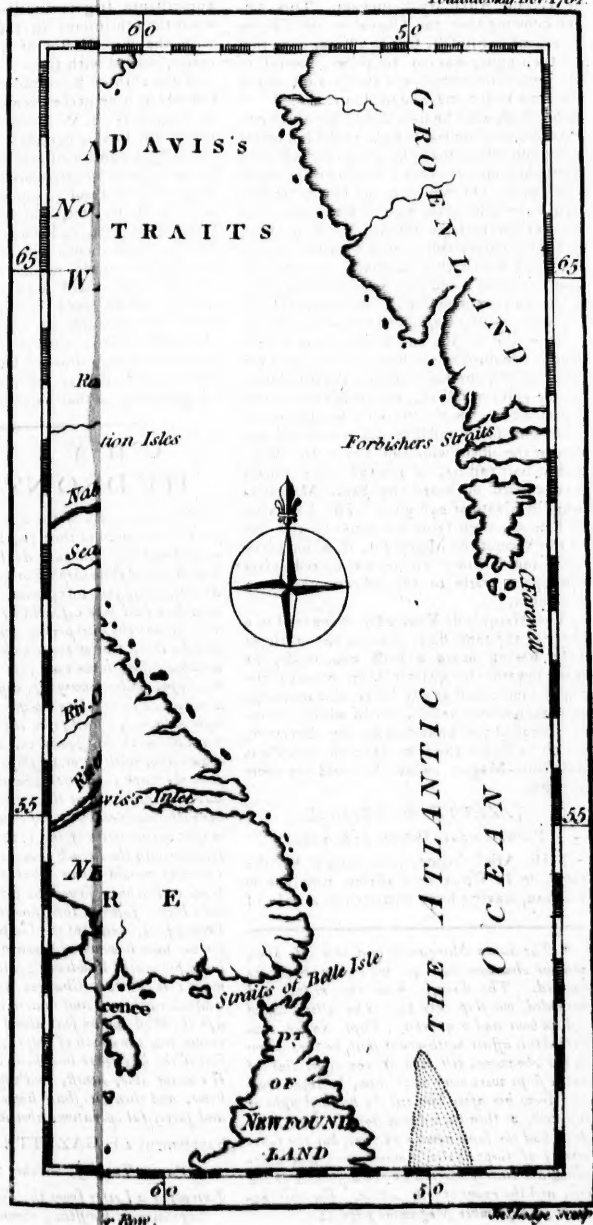
C H A R T O F HUDSON'S BAY,

With an account of the destruction of the Company's Settlement in that quarter, by a detachment from the Marquis de Vaudreuil's fleet, which sailed from Cape Francois in the island of St. Domingo, just forty-nine days after that very fleet had been defeated by Admiral Rodney. This shows the enterprising spirit of the French. Besides this, two or three rich French fleets of merchant ships have come safe to France from the Cape, under convoys of different ships of the vanquished fleet. Don Joseph Solano, the Spanish Admiral, sailed from the Cape to the Havannah with his squadron, unmolested: Vaudreuil also, with 13 or 14 ships of the line, sailed from the Cape for North America; and all this has happened without the least interruption from our victorious fleet. Our ships were but slightly damaged in the action of the 12th of April in comparison with the French fleet. A station off Cape Francois would have blocked up the French trade to Europe; saved the Settlements at Hudson's Bay; fastened the Spanish Admiral in a French port, and kept the Gulf of Florida open for our own homeward bound fleets; and would have prevented Vaudreuil's sailing to North America to fight. Changes and fluctuation of Councils at home, and inattention abroad, have left the West Indian seas almost as safe for the enemy since the month of April, as if our forty sail of the line there had been all fast asleep. We want able, honest, and vigorous Councils at home, and then we shall have alert, vigorous, and successful operations abroad.

Supplement a la GAZETTE de FRANCE.

Paris, Tuesday, October 29th, 1782.

Extract of a Letter from the Sieur de la Perouse,
Capitaine de Vaisseau, commanding a division
of



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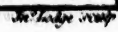
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of the King's fleet, to the Marquis de Castries,
Minister and Secretary of State for the Ma-
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*On Board the Sceptre, in Hudson's
Strait, September 6th, 1782.*

YOU have been informed of my departure from Cape Francois the 31st of May, with the Sceptre of 74 guns, and the Affree and Engageante of 36 guns each, commanded by the Chevalier de Langle, and the Sieur de la Jaille, Lieutenants de Vaisseau, for the expedition in Hudson's Bay. I had embarked at St. Domingo 250 men of Armagnac and Auxerrois, and 45 artillery men, 2 eight-inch mortars, 300 bombs, and 4 cannon. This detachment was under the command of the Sieur de Roiffing, Major of the regiment of Armagnac. The Sieur, le Certain, Captain of Artillery in the service of the Colonies was charged with whatever related to that department. The Sieur de Monneron, Captain in the royal corps of Engineers was to direct the operation of the sieges; and the Sieur de Mansuy, Captain-engineer of the Colonies was to take plans of the coasts and bays which we were going to survey.

Nothing remarkable happened in my navigation until the 17th of July, when at midnight I made the island of Resolution. I had scarcely proceeded 20 leagues up Hudson's Strait, when obstacles of every kind multiplied: my vessels remained several days fast in the ice; the seamen went on foot from one ship to another; the Affree and Engageante suffered infinitely, and were so much damaged in their bows as to alarm me greatly. The Sceptre also was very nearly losing her rudder. Every thing was new to us in this navigation, which had made me neglect taking on board ice anchors, which would have been of the greatest service to me. At last on the 30th of July, I had sight of Cape Walsingham, which is the most westerly part of the Straits. Till then I had no other guide, than some points astronomically determined, inserted in the Practical Navigator, and by means of which the Sieur de Mansuy and myself have sketched out a chart, which we corrected in proportion as the fog permitted us to discern some risings of the land. I now flattered myself the greatest of my difficulties were conquered, and I burned with impatience to arrive speedily at Fort Prince Wales. This was the first place which I proposed to attack; I had not an instant to lose, the rigour of the season obliging all ships to abandon this sea in the first days of September; but my impatience was put to a new proof. On the 3d of August, sailing with security enough in the Bay of Hudson, I was enveloped in a fog, and immediately surrounded with large islands of ice, which forced me to make a signal for my division to bring to. The fog dissipating two hours after, I saw the three ships wedged in the ice, which extended beyond our view. I had then a well-

grounded apprehension of losing the season for operation, and I was almost determined to send back my ship and a frigate to the windward islands, and to winter in the bay myself with the other frigate, and a small number of troops under the Sieur de Roiffing. I should have attacked and destroyed the English settlements the next season, but on the 5th of August the bank of ice, in which I was engaged, opened a little, and I determined to force through it by a press of sail, whatever risk my ships might run. I was happy enough to accomplish it; and on the 8th of August in the evening, I saw the colours of Fort Prince Wales. I approached within a league and a half of it, sounding all the way, and I anchored my division in eighteen fathom water, muddy bottom. In the mean time I sent an officer to sound; he reported that it was safe for our ships to approach very near the Fort; and I was assured, that if the enemy should meditate any resistance, the Sceptre could easily reduce them; all my preparations were instantly made for the descent, but the night was become very dark, and the tide contrary. It was two in the morning before the boats began to move. The descent was made, without opposition, three quarters of a league from the Fort, which was built with free-stone, and appeared in a condition to make a vigorous defence. The Sieur de Roiffing advanced with his detachment within cannon shot, there halted, and not seeing on the part of the enemy any disposition for defence, he sent to summon the fort to surrender. They made no hesitation; the gates were opened; and the governor and garrison* surrendered at discretion.

There was in this fort a very great quantity of merchandize of every kind; the artillery was in the best condition possible; all the magazines were covered with lead.

Not having an instant to lose in finishing my operations in the Bay of Hudson, I determined to burn every thing, excepting some beaver skins and other furs, which have been shipped on board the Affree. I have given to the Savages whatever they thought proper to carry away, particularly powder and shot, these people living only by hunting.

On the 11th I set sail for Fort York, the chief settlement of the English in this Bay; but I underwent here much greater difficulties than those which I had to overcome since my entrance into these seas. I knew that the coast was full of rocky shoals; I had no chart; our prisoners obstinately refused to give me the least information: at last after

* If Monsieur de la Perouse had favoured us with the numbers of the garrison, it would have been a curious detail.—The Storekeepers and Servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the five different Factories in that Bay, are in all from 100 to 120 men. See Magazine 1780, page 292.

Infinite precautions, and risques of every kind ran by the Sceptre and the two frigates, in navigating in six and seven fathoms water, on a rocky bottom, I arrived in sight of the entrance of Nelson's River, where I anchored the 20th of August, about five leagues from the land. I had fortunately joined to my division three decked boats taken at Port Prince Wales, which have proved of the greatest assistance to me. I had entrusted the command of them to the Sieurs de Bordieu, Enseigne de Vaisseau, a Swede; Dorie, Lieut. de Frigate, and Carbonneau, Garde de la Marine (Midshipman). It is impossible to be better served than by these three officers, in sounding ahead, and proceeding to the discovery of Hays River, on which Fort York is situated, and the approaches to which I knew were almost impracticable to large vessels. The 18th of August, the Sieurs de Bordieu and Carbonneau, each in their boat, and the Sieur de la Lefebvre, auxiliary officer, in the yawl of the Sceptre, took an exact survey of the river. I waited for them at anchor in the offing, eight leagues distance, and out of sight of the shore. They took an exact survey of the soundings; and on their return on board, they piloted in my division.

The 20th of August in the evening, we anchored in a very good muddy bottom.

The 21st in the morning I prepared for my descent with the first of the flood tide. I thought it my duty to put myself at the head of the boats, having nothing to fear from the enemy on the side of the sea, and as the great distance of our ships might make the garrison entertain projects of defence, which that of Port Prince Wales could not have had any idea of, from the ease with which my ship could approach that settlement. I ordered the Chevalier de Langie to follow me, and I charged the Sieur de la Jaille with the command of the division, assuring him, that the landing accomplished, I should return on board my ship, and leave the Chevalier de Langie with the command of the boats, which were to remain until the reduction of the fort.

The life of Hays, on which Fort York is situated, is at the mouth of a great river, which it divides into two branches; that before the fort is called Hays River; the other Nelson River. I knew that all the means of defence were on Hays River; and that beside, a ship belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, carrying 26 nine-pounders, was anchored at the mouth of it; this river is also full of sand banks; the currents very violent; the tide rises and falls with great rapidity; our boats might remain stranded within cannon shot of the fort, or the ship; and it behoved us not to give so favourable an occasion to the enemy; I therefore made choice of Nelson River, though I knew very well that our troops would have a march of about four leagues to make, but by that, all the batteries on Hays River, would be taken

in reverse, and consequently become useless.

The 21st in the evening, we arrived at the mouth of Nelson River, with the little fleet of boats; they were 12 in number, including those I had taken at Port Prince Wales. I had about 250 troops, all my mortars, all my cannon, and eight days provisions. These dispositions were made, that nothing more might be wanted from the vessels, with which it was difficult to communicate, on account of the great distance at which they were constrained to remain. I ordered the boats to anchor in three fathom water at the entrance of the river, and I advanced in my yawl, with the Chevalier de Langie, the Sieurs de Rostaing and de Monneron, to sound the river, along which, I supposed the enemy might have made some dispositions to oppose the descent.

At five in the evening, we had passed so near Fort York and the Company's ship, that by their glasses, they might have distinguished the colour of the cloaths of our troops; the ship had even fired a cannon loaded with ball, but out of reach, and the Fort had answered it. I believed this might be a signal for their troops to march towards Nelson River. What I had most to fear was some rabble of savages, which the enemy might induce by brandy and gunpowder, to take arms in their defence.

After sounding for the space of a league, I found Nelson River inaccessible. The smallest boats could not approach nearer than about a hundred fathoms, and the remaining space was lost mud. In consequence of this we determined to wait until day, and to remain at anchor; but the tide falling much more than I had presumed, my boats, which had anchored in two and a half fathom water, were left dry at three in the morning. The Chevalier de Langie then proposed to the Sieur de Rostaing to wade through the mud, and to proceed instantly to the shore. The advice was found good; all the troops debarked in this fashion, with their muskets on their shoulders; we marched a quarter of a league with the mud up to our knees, and arrived at length at a meadow, which was no more than a swamp, within half a league of the woods. The troops then formed in battalia, and marched about a league towards this wood, where we flattered ourselves we should find a dry path, that might conduct us to the Fort. A prisoner whom we paid generously, having offered to serve as a guide, he showed us a road, which the Sieur de Rostaing caused to be reconnoitred, and which was judged to be impracticable; but we have since learned that it was the best in the island. All the day was passed in fruitless attempts to find roads which did not exist. At length I determined to trace one by the compass, through the middle of the woods and swamps. The Sieurs de

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Monneron and Mansuy were charged with this extremely laborious task. We encamp- ed at the entrance of the woods; and in the evening, we were told, that there was a mor- als of two leagues to cross, where we would often plunge up to the knees in mud.

In the night it blew a very heavy gale. I was under the greatest anxiety for my ships anchored on the open coast, and in a latitude where the sea is dreadful, and where the bot- tom although of mud, is interperfed with rocks which cut the cables. I resolved instantly to use all my efforts to regain my division; the landing being accomplished, I did not think myself any longer authorized to abandon my ships, above all at a time when they were in the most imminent danger. I ordered the Chevalier de Langle to remain commander of the boats, and I hastened to the sea shore, but the tempest still continuing, it was impossible for me to get on board. Next day, I profited by an interval, and got on board an hour be- fore another storm came on. The Sieur de Carboneau, who had set off along with me, was cast away in his boat, but was so fortu- nate as to get to land with his crew. Three days after they returned on board naked, hav- ing subsisted on herbs and some wild fruits. The Engageante lost two anchors in the se- cond gale, and the Aftree two. If it had lasted some hours longer, the frigate of the Sieur de la Jaille would have been lost, and 300 men drowned.

On the 26th, the wind having calmed, I learned that our troops had arrived before the fort on the 24th in the morning, and that at the first summons from the Sieur de Roftaing, the gates had been opened to him, a capitula- tion having been proposed and accepted. I wrote to the Sieur de Roftaing to press him to burn every thing, and to reembark immedi- ately. The anchorage where I was, was not te- nable. The Sieur de Roftaing felt for my si- tuation, and made all possible dispatch. It is my duty to mention, that one of the satis- factions, which hath in some degree alleviated the incredible fatigues of this campaign, is the advantage of having had to concert my o- perations with an officer, whose zeal, ta- lents, and love for the good of the service, convinced me, that all our attacks would be attended with full success.

My measures were again disconcerted by another gale of wind, in which the Engage- ante run again new risques; her third an- chor was broken, and the tiller of her helm, and her boat was lost. My own boat, com- manded by the Sieur du Bordieu was also cast ashore, and I lost my yawl and an anchor.

At last fair weather returned, and I had the pleasure on the morning of the 31st of August, to see Fort York on fire, and the Sieur de Roftaing with the remainder of his men, coming off in a large boat, belonging to the Company, which I had taken in the river. During the night, he anchored a league from my ship, and in the morning, he

embarked on board the Sceptre. I immedi- ately set sail, having on board the three go- vernors of Forts Prince Wales, York, and Severn. This last is a small settlement de- pendent on York, which I did not destroy, as it was of no importance, and as my ships, without anchors or boats, and having 300 sick, could do nothing better than quit these seas, which since the 24th of August, are more stormy than the Channel in the month of January.

I think I may estimate the loss occasioned to the Hudson's Bay Company, at 10 or 12 millions* of livres.

I took care, in burning Fort York, to save a considerable magazine, in a place remote from the fire, and in which I caused to be de- posited provisions, powder, shot, firelocks, and a certain quantity of European merchan- dize, the most proper for exchanges with the Savages; in order that some English, whom I knew had taken refuge in the woods, should they return to their old place of resi- dence, find in that magazine wherewith- al to provide for their subsistence, until England might be informed of their situation. I am assured that in this respect the King will approve of my conduct, and that by in- teresting myself in the fate of those unfortu- nate people, I have done no more than anti- cipate the benevolent intentions of his Ma- jesty.

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* Twelve Millions of Livres is exactly half a Million Sterling.

Orkney Islands, Stromness, Oct. 28.
" On the 14th current, the ship King George, one of the Hudson's Bay ships, arrived here, after a tedious passage from York Fort, in Hud- son's Bay, and brings information, that a few days after she had arrived there, and had got on board about two-thirds of her cargo, a French 74 gun ship called Le Sceptre, and two large frigates, made their appearance a small distance from the place where the King George lay, and landed some hundreds of troops. As the French ships were lying without Capt. Fowler's vessel, he was obliged to cut his cable in the night-time and went to sea, and by that means escaped being taken. On the day follow- ing his arrival here, the Prince Rupert, Capt. Christopher, another of the Company's ships, and a sloop which had been at Churchill and Severn, in Hudson's Bay, also arrived here, and brought certain accounts that the same French ships appeared off Churchill about the beginning of August last, had landed about 600 or 700 troops, and had taken and destroyed Churchill Fort, after taking away the furs and other ar- ticles, the cargo the Prince Rupert was going for, and carried away the people in the Fort as prisoners of war. They also bring accounts that York Fort had surrendered after Captain Fowler left it; and that the French troops blew

Supplément à la GAZETTE de FRANCE.

Paris, Friday, November 8, 1782.

Copy of a letter from the Sieur de la Touche, Capitaine de Vaisseau, commanding his Majesty's Frigate L'Égle (the Eagle) to the Marquis de Castries, dated September 5th, 1782.

"I HAVE the honour to inform you, that in the night between the 4th and 5th of September, latitude 39. 10. longitude 67. 53. I descried a vessel to leeward, steering as myself close to the wind, starboard tack aboard, the wind west and pretty fresh. I bore down upon him the better to reconnoitre. Having approached within half cannon shot, I was not at a loss to judge, from the elevation of his decks, that he was a ship of two tier of guns.

"The frigate La Gloire, commanded by the Chevalier de Vallongue, was to leeward of me, and much nearer to the ship in sight. I judged from the lanterns which I saw lighting in the batteries of this vessel, that they intended to engage; and not thinking the match equal, and reflecting on the importance of the commission with which I was charged, I hauled my wind, and made sail. I expected the Gloire would make the same movement, without my having recourse to the night signals to direct him to follow my manœuvre; but the Chevalier de Vallongue found himself at that time within half musket shot of the enemy, who hailed him; they were speaking each other when I made the signal for following me. The Chevalier de Vallongue, thinking that the enemy would not fail to profit of, and give him a broadside, during the advantageous position in which the frigate would present herself to him, whilst he was executing my orders, boldly resolved to bear down upon him, and rake him a-head; the enemy returned his fire, and the engagement began within pistol shot. The first shot fired at the Gloire, put an end to all the reflections which I was making re-

is up, and made the people of that fort prisoners of war also. The Prince Rupert was chased by one of the French frigates for 19 hours, and very narrowly escaped being taken."

The principal settlements belonging to our Hudson's Bay Company at present are, Forts Churchill, Nelson, New Severn, and Albany, on the west side of the Bay, and Forts Charles and Rupert, on the bottom of the Bay. This Company, which does not consist of above nine or ten merchants, obtained their first charter from Charles the Second, in the year 1669, by which the sole property of all the lands, trade, royal fishery, and mines within Hudson's Straits, not actually possessed by any Christian Prince was vested in them. Their imports are, deer-skins, furs, castoreum and beaver-skins, sealbears, walrusbone and blubber.

specting the event of an engagement, which I thought very unequal. I wore to join the frigate and to second her. After the Gloire and the enemy had exchanged some broadsides, the firing between them ceased; the two captains hailed each other again, interrogated one another respecting their colours, and the engagement immediately began afresh. It was at this instant that I placed myself between the Gloire and the enemy, and began to fire from all my artillery, which appeared to me to produce a great effect. The fire from the ship was not so brisk as I had reason to expect; he hauled to windward in such a manner, that I could not doubt his intention was to board me. I knew from the calibre of the bullets which came on board, of 36, 18, and eight pounds, that I was engaged with a ship of 74 guns, and having no other chance than that which he now offered me, I resolved not to refuse it, having on board 500 combatants spirited by the example of the Sieurs Baron de Viomenil, Duc de Lauzun, Marquis de Laval, Marquis de de Champenetz, Mac-Mahon, Sheldon, the Comtes de Chabanne, de Tallyrand, de Rice, and de Langeron the son, the Sieur de Brentano, and other officers, whose courage and great valour animated my crew. The enemy's spiritfall yard* was caught in my forebrows; in this position I gave him a complete broadside, and made my men huzza, "board, and God save the King." The Baron de Viomenil was prepared to leap on board the enemy, followed by all the above named officers, when the ship manœuvred to get clear without firing a single shot, which I attributed to the terror that my resolution had infused into her crew, who in all probability were not numerous. The men who loaded the guns in the enemy's lower battery, and those in mine, struck each other with their gun rammers. The ships being separated from each other, we renewed the combat at the distance of musket shot, and the enemy's fire diminished in a most extraordinary degree. At day-break the Gloire, which had taken a favourable position re-engaged, and raked the enemy fore and aft, he was unrigged, and manœuvred with great difficulty. I should have continued the engagement, the issue of which would, in all appearance, have been in our favour, when my men on the look out called to me that they saw several sail, one of which I could myself perceive to be a vessel with three masts, and having all the appearance of a ship of the line. I feared with reason the 74 gun ship we were engaged with, was part of a squadron, to which the sails in sight might belong; having therefore solicited my duty respecting the honour of the flag, I made a signal to the Gloire to crowd sail and follow me. The enemy's ship made no move-

* The yard and sail which hangs under the bowsprit.

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